

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

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Update on the Missouri Pre K-16 Activities and Efforts
Coordinating Board for Higher Education
October 14, 2004

DESCRIPTION

Across the nation, states are involved in the design of Pre K-16 initiatives. By coordinating and collaborating agendas across educational sectors, states are increasing their success in raising standards, improving student success, eliminating unnecessary duplication, and reducing the need for remediation of recent high school graduates. The intent of this board item is to provide an update on Missouri's Pre K-16 work.

Background

Prior to December 1997, Pre K-16 activity in Missouri was primarily driven separately by various state agencies and educational institutions with minimal attempts at coordination within and across sectors and often with state visibility of limited duration. December 1997 marked the beginning of a more formal approach to Pre K-16 work in Missouri. At that time, the State Board of Education, the Coordinating Board for Higher Education, and the University of Missouri Board of Curators jointly issued a statement to design and implement a coordinated educational system that would result in:

- Quality performance standards for all students,
- Public awareness of the importance of student performance,
- Enhanced student performance at all levels, based on preparation and ability,
- Curricular alignment throughout the educational system in major disciplines,
- Full articulation within and across Pre K-12 and postsecondary education, and
- Less need for remediation.

In the years that have ensued, Missouri has involved key business, education, and political leaders in panels and task forces dedicated to study of Pre K-16 issues, e.g., Task Force on Mathematics in Missouri, Task Force on the Achievement Gap Elimination, Business Education Roundtable, Task Force on High School Reform, Commission on the Future of Higher Education, and the Missouri Training and Employment Council's work on the Missouri State of the Workforce Report 2004. Each of these groups has studied Pre K-16 opportunities and challenges in extensive detail and has issued a report that includes key recommendations sent to the governor, to the respective Pre K-16 sponsors, and to the Missouri public.

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Common to most of these reports are the following conclusions:

- Education is an investment in the future both for the individual and for the state;
- There is extensive interdependence among the early childhood, K-12, and higher education sectors that should be considered when designing new initiatives;
- While there are many positive results occurring in Missouri's educational sectors, there is a sense of urgency that Missouri should accelerate improvements in educational performance to stay competitive locally, nationally, and globally;
- The skills and knowledge necessary for beyond high school options, whether in work or in formal education, have converged suggesting a need to have all students complete a rigorous high school curriculum;
- Achievement gaps in Missouri are large, measurable, and are not shrinking;
- Teacher quality is a major factor affecting student performance;
- An integrated data base will serve to inform public policy discussion and to track effectiveness of particular initiatives; and
- Despite limited resources, incentives should be identified to promote desired results.

Recently, representatives from DHE, COPHE, and MCCA met with Dr. Kent King, Commissioner of Education, and Mr. Kelvin Simmons, Director of the Department of Economic Development, to discuss Missouri's previous efforts at Pre K-16 work and to explore future directions. Participants were in general agreement that Missouri has studied Pre K-16 issues extensively and does not need an additional task force or panel for further study. Rather, Missouri's challenge is to identify a few key priorities, focus on implementation challenges, design systematic and regular evaluation systems, and ensure sustainability of desired results. There was also general agreement that the following three strategic areas would constitute a common agenda for a renewed Pre K-16 partnership in Missouri: expanding early awareness of the requirements for beyond high school success, increasing readiness for postsecondary education and work by enhancing the participation in and rigor of the high school core curriculum, and improving teacher quality through improved preparation and professional development.

Conclusions

The need for further study of Pre K-16 issues in Missouri has passed. Using previous reports and recommendations, Missouri is well positioned to prioritize its Pre K-16 agenda and focus on implementation strategies. There is not one ideal structure used by states in support of Pre K-16 work. The use of an intentional structure, however, at both state and local levels to maintain a focused agenda, assign responsibility for action, and ensure effective follow-up using agreed-upon indicators to measure success is needed.

STATUTORY REFERENCE

Section 167.223, RSMo, High School Offerings of Postsecondary Course Options

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Section 173.005.2(4), RSMo, Admission Guidelines

Section 173.005.2(6), RSMo, Transfer of Students

Section 173.005.2(7), RSMo, Data Collection

Section 173.020(2), RSMo, Identification of Higher Education Needs

RECOMMENDED ACTION

This is a discussion item only.

ATTACHMENT (S)

None